

Sheriff says he needs \$34M more to institute jail reforms

By Christina Villacorte Staff Writer

Sheriff Lee Baca has calculated he needs at least \$34 million to beef up supervision at county jails and implement other reforms sought by the Commission on Jail Violence to prevent deputies from abusing inmates.

In a report to the Board of Supervisors, released Tuesday, Baca estimated the overall cost of implementing the blue-ribbon panel's 63 recommendations is at least \$60.9 million.

To date, the department is absorbing almost half of that expense. Baca is working with the county's chief executive officer to try to come up with the rest of the cash.

Unless money is secured, several reforms may hang in the balance, such as the hiring of more than 100 supervisors to keep deputies from getting out of line, estimated to cost almost \$20 million.

The department also plans to hire 160 custody assistants for \$15 million; add several weeks of training for \$12 million; and create a new internal audit and inspections division for almost \$9 million.

Other so-far unfunded reforms include \$771,000 to hire a new assistant sheriff for custody, an experienced manager whose sole responsibility would be to operate the jails.

The department did not immediately respond to questions on whether that

amount represented a single person's salary, or included other expenses such as support staff.

The report noted Baca plans to choose a candidate by the end of the year.

One of the commission's most important recommendations — creating an independent Office of Inspector General — has yet to be assigned a dollar amount.

The cost of expanding the department's internal affairs investigations is also to be determined.

A top aide to Supervisor Michael Antonovich, Anna Pembedjian, said the department's math would have to be reconciled with that of the CEO, the independent monitor for the reforms, and jail consultants and experts.

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